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ADDRESSES

MADE AT A SUPPER TO

MR. AND MRS. EDWARD J. DE COPPET

AND

THE FLONZALEY QUARTET

NEW YORK, MARCH NINTH, 19 4

AT SHERRY'S

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AT THE GUEST TABLE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:—Mr. d'Archambeau; Mr. K. Mrs. de Coppet; Mr. Holt; Mr. de Coppet; Mrs. Schelling; Mr. Ara; Mrs. Kneisel.



sel; Mrs. Svecenski; Mrs. Bauer; Mr. Delano; Mr. Betti; Mr. Schelling;
Mr. Pochon; Mrs. Whitman; Mr. Svecenski; Mrs. Holt; Mr. Wilson;

NO WILL
GIVE YOU

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MADE AT A SUPPER TO
MR. AND MRS. EDWARD J. DE COPPET
AND
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NEW YORK, MARCH NINTH, 1914
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PRIVATELY PRINTED

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PREFATORY

On the evening of March 9th, 1914, the Flonzaley Quartet completed its tenth season in New York at a concert given in Aeolian Hall.

In acknowledgment of the distinguished services rendered to the cause of chamber music by Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. de Coppet in founding the Quartet, an invitation was extended to them and to the members of the Quartet to attend a supper immediately after the concert. More than two hundred musicians and music lovers assembled at Sherry's to do honor to the guests of the evening, in the course of which presentations were made of a silver tankard to Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet, and gold watches and fobs to the members of the Quartet.

After the supper, Mr. Henry Holt presided as Toastmaster, and the following addresses were delivered.

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A SUPPER TO
MR. AND MRS. EDWARD J. DE COPPET
AND
THE FLONZALEY QUARTET

March Ninth, 1914

at Sherry's, Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street

MR. HENRY HOLT, TOASTMASTER

MR. HOLT:

Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. de Coppet has just said to me that he can't for the soul of him make out what all this is for. He says he can't conceive what he has done that should bring all of us here to greet him. Well, his modesty is as remarkable as his other qualities. I'll tell him why we're here. We have come to honor a great philanthropist who has done great things for a great Art; and we have come to honor a friend who has probably contributed more than any other one man in New York to our happiness and our spiritual development. (*Great applause.*)

We have also come to honor four great artists (*Applause.* A voice: "Five!"), and as the Kneisels are with us, I think that while we are about it we may as well call it eight. (*Applause.*) And now that we have got so near to the number of the Muses, I propose to pay our respects to the ninth, to the fifth of the Flon-

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zaley Quartet: I know you all want to drink the health of Mrs. de Coppet. (*Great applause.*) I do not know whether you young folks know it, but old soldiers like Mr. Rice and me, who used to go to the de Coppers' for chamber music pretty near thirty years ago, know that if it had not been for Mrs. de Coppet there wouldn't be any Flonzaley Quartet, and that is a pretty important matter.

But now that we are speaking of the ladies, I suppose we ought also to pay our respects to the Olive Mead Quartet. (*Applause.*) But they have fallen into ways which interfere with the regularity of practice (*Laughter*), and there are only three of them here tonight—but I am happy to be able to report that mother and child are doing well. (*Laughter and applause.*)

Well, I suppose that we are here not only because of these dear and admired friends of ours, but because we are all of us amateurs of the Quartet itself. At the celebration of the Kneisel silver wedding with their audience, some four or five years ago, Mr. Krehbiel let out something I hadn't the pluck to say, but which I believed and backed him up in afterwards—that of all music, Beethoven's last quartets are the greatest that was ever written, and I suspect that we honor ourselves in honoring the Quartet.

When they want to throw into bold relief these great artists, they select the very worst quartet player in New York to preside on the occasion—that is universally admitted—but, badly as I play, I know one thing about the Quartet which I don't believe any of the rest of you know, and I am going to take three minutes, late as it is, to tell you. I don't believe any of us, except myself, begins to realize what a quartet can express. I am fortunate enough to live most of the year in a little place where there is a very fine violinist, who is also a fine theoretical musician, and we got up a sort

of quartet—it would have been a mighty good one if we had had a decent 'cello player—and I said to him early last summer, "I miss orchestral music, living up here the greater part of the year, and I have been trying to get some sort of comprehension of Liszt's Preludes," I didn't care to hear them on a piano: so I said: "Would it be a crazy thing to arrange them for a quartet?" and he said, "No, a quartet can express anything." I said, "Try to arrange it." He said he would try a page, and when we played it, it went first rate. Then we took another page, and so on we went, a page or two at a time, until we had the whole thing, and I can tell you it was perfectly tremendous. Of course we were in a small room: the room can hardly be too small for such a purpose. I don't believe anybody can conceive without trying it, what a quartet can do to give the spirit of a colossal composition like that. It was not the soulless playing of the piano rendering: there was color in it; in that beautiful arpeggio accompaniment, originally played by the bassoon, the viola sounded like a bassoon; and in the Pastorale the thing actually sounded like an oboe. It is astonishing how the viola will take the color from a passage. If you associate any instrument with any passage, the viola will call up that association, and somehow it seems, chameleon-like, to take the color of anything it touches. I could talk two or three hours more on the subject, but I won't. (*Laughter and applause.*) But if any of you want to try what a quartet can express, I'll lend you my copy of the Liszt arrangement.

(*Turning to Mr. de Coppet, and raising his glass.*) And now, my dear old friend, here's to you! We all want to drink to you! May you live to see your children gray! May you have returned to you a thousand-fold all you have done for us! (*Great applause*) and when you go to Heaven, as you are sure to if anybody does, in-

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stead of being received by the orthodox orchestra of trombones and harps, may you be received by a string quartet! (*Laughter and applause.*)

And now there is at least one man here who knows better than I, the history of the circumstances which led to the creation of the Flonzaley Quartet. That man is Mr. Rice. I believe he played in the first piece of chamber music at Mr. de Coppet's home, and he is to have the pleasant privilege of presenting to our old friend, a testimonial, a souvenir, an indication in a very faint way, of our appreciation of what he has done as a philanthropist and a lover of art, and of our gratitude for what he has done for us as a friend. (*Applause.*)

MR. EDWIN T. RICE:

Mr. Kapellmeister, Ladies and Gentlemen: The occasion which first prompted the giving of this supper was the one thousandth evening or afternoon of de Coppet chamber music in New York, to which many of you were invited some time ago. A certain musical antiquarian then discovered that by a happy coincidence, the twenty-fifth season of de Coppet music also completed the tenth anniversary of the Flonzaley Quartet. You have therefore been invited to this family party to celebrate two family anniversaries.

The gentlemen of the press have not been bidden—at least in their official capacity—and it is our purpose to preserve the intimate quality—and may I also say—the charm of the occasion, as is appropriate to all that concerns chamber music and the shrines in which its divinities are worshipped.

One of the most remarkable of the temples erected for musical worship here in New York, is that long maintained by Edward and Pauline de Coppet; and

we are now assembled as privileged worshippers at that shrine to do honor to our high priest and priestess.

As perhaps the oldest of those worshippers now present, it has devolved upon me to be your first spokesman—or shall I say acolyte. The occasion which we are first celebrating is the silver anniversary—the completion by our guests of twenty-five seasons of musical delight and hospitable welcome, of a full quarter of a century of whole-hearted devotion to the noble art of chamber music.

A few of you here present may remember the first years of that family worship; more of you joined the congregation in what may be called its middle period. All of you have witnessed its splendid culmination in the founding of the Flonzaley Quartet, which for the past ten years has made that shrine famous and distinguished not only in the musical annals of the City, but also throughout the entire world of chamber music.

It was my own good fortune to become an active worshipper at that shrine upon its first establishment in New York, and it has been my even greater privilege to share in its musical ritual without interruption, ever since its services were first inaugurated.

If you will allow me for a moment to become reminiscent, I will take you back with me to a certain quiet October evening rather more than twenty-five years ago, the first of those thousand and more nights and days of music, which have unspeakably enriched the lives of those who have been permitted to share in their delights. The program included the first of the trios of Beethoven and Schumann. Mrs. de Coppet presided at the piano—and to our great joy Mrs. de Coppet has been the inspired and inspiring interpreter of all the piano chamber music which has been heard in the de Coppet temple during the past quarter of a century. And that means that she has interpreted to us bril-

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liantly and sympathetically nearly all of the great compositions which combine the piano with strings—from Bach to Brahms—from Mozart and Beethoven to Richard Strauss—a variety and range of exposition that few other living artists could match. Long may she continue in this divinely appointed mission and permit us, her fellow-worshippers, to remain spellbound and entranced by the inspired revelations of the beautiful art to which she has devoted so much of her life. (*Great applause.*)

The earliest of the violinists was Mrs. de Coppet's brother, Charles Bouis, a gifted pupil of César Thomson and an artist of the greatest refinement and distinction. Mr. Bouis had then just established himself in New York, and for twelve delightful seasons he led the stringed instruments in most of the chamber music performed in the de Coppet temple. At times, he resigned the first desk in quartets to take that of viola—an instrument which he played with noble tone and vivid effect. We, who knew him well and loved him no less as artist than as man, have missed him sadly since his return to Europe, and in the affectionate regard of his many New York friends his place will not be filled until he himself returns to claim our allegiance.

When the trio became a quartet, as it did very soon after that first evening, Julian Tinkham and William Rachau, both enthusiastic amateurs, filled the middle voices. Many so-called "festivals" were held in those early days. The entire world of chamber music was explored under the helpful guidance of our high priest, Edward de Coppet. Each year, he assembled his musicians for a dinner upon St. Cecelia's day, at which the musical activities of his household were passed in review, and upon which occasions he fired us with his own kindling enthusiasm for the masterpieces of his beloved art, and encouraged us to strive for better and

more adequate interpretation of them. He brought to us the fruits of rare musical experience, ripe judgment and the keenest of musical consciences. Quality, refinement of tone, the most careful preparation, conscientious study of the composer's purpose—all of these standards—counsel of perfection if you choose—were held up before us as ideals to be striven for—and with an effect which upon at least one of the humbler collaborators will never be forgotten. Our loving gratitude is due to him for the opportunities he then afforded us, for the patience with which he submitted to our shortcomings, and for the enthusiasm with which he inspired us for the loftiest and best in musical literature and musical interpretation.

A memorable event during this early period was the first visit to New York of the Kneisel Quartet which opened our eyes and ears to hitherto undreamed of possibilities of beauty, due to perfection of ensemble, purity and refinement of tone combined with loftiness of artistic purpose. The Kneisels—happily long since established in New York—have ever continued to be an inspiration and help to all true lovers of chamber music, and their ministrations in the de Coppet temple have been notable incidents in its history. (*Applause.*)

What may be called the middle period of worship at the de Coppet shrine, began about fifteen years ago, and involved the collaboration of many artists, including the brothers Jennison, Messrs. Karger, Volpe, Mittel, Marum, Sanders and others. Then came the memorable first visit to this country of a certain Alfred Pochon. (*Applause.*) The following season saw the establishment of the Flonzaley Quartet in Vienna, and then that Quartet began its ministrations in that west-side temple where we have during these ten seasons past so often been permitted to share in its devotions.

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The work of the Quartet it does not fall within my province to discuss. Their eloquence, tonal beauty and marvelous vividness of color have been freshly impressed upon you this evening, and will be praised and discussed by those who are to follow me.

But in summing up this quarter century of art worship, let me sound again the personal note with which I began. Nowhere than in this de Coppet household has there been fuller realization of simplicity and charm of living with the loftiest ethical and musical thinking. Generous hospitality has been extended to us. The masterpieces of chamber music have been presented to us by many of the greatest artists of the day. Always a spirit of altruism has pervaded the household, a desire to increase the happiness of others—giving all, asking nothing in return. So have our friends been and so may they long continue members of that choir—not “invisible” as in George Eliot’s phrase—but visible and audible

“Whose music is the gladness
of the world.”

And in proposing their healths and presenting in your names this piece of silver, I cannot do better than read the illuminated address which has been composed by Mr. Spencer, and which I hope you will all sign before the close of the evening.

To our friends,

EDWARD AND PAULINE DE COPPET:

We, who have had so many welcomes and kindnesses at your hands, hope and believe that you already know the depth of our appreciation. But it is very grateful to us to tell you of it a little more formally, to make this record of it—not lest we or you forget, but that it may, perhaps, be to others, as well as to you, something of a living testimony.



SILVER TANKARD PRESENTED TO MR. AND MRS. DE COPPET

The height, including the pedestal, is nineteen inches.

It was made in the year 1783 by John Scofield, who was registered at Goldsmith's Hall, London, in the year 1778. The arms upon the tankard are those of the Preston family, dating back to the year 1300. The motto is "Presto ut præstem."

The inscription upon the pedestal accompanying the tankard reads as follows:

To

EDWARD AND PAULINE DE COPPET
a loving appreciation at the end of the tenth season
of the

FLONZALEY QUARTET
March 9th, 1914.

It has not been given to many, as to you, to contribute so much or so whole-heartedly to the higher happiness and musical culture of the community. We are all better and less worldly for what you have done, not alone because of it, but especially by reason of the lovely spirit in which you have done it. You have the satisfaction which comes with success and, what is more worth while, you have also the loyal gratitude of every one. In token of it, and in memory of the thousand hospitable concerts you have given, it is our delight, on this tenth anniversary of the beginnings of the Flonzaley Quartet, to bring to you our greetings, our homage, and, what we hope you will like best, our affection.

Mr. Rice then presented to Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet the singularly graceful eighteenth century silver tankard. Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet rose to bow their thanks, and were kept on their feet some time by the enthusiastic applause.

MR. JULIAN TINKHAM:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. de Coppet has asked me to read for him something he has written in response to Mr. Rice's address. I shall do so with pleasure, but I am sure you all regret as much as I do, that he does not feel he is able to read it himself. I can give you Mr. de Coppet's words, but I shall be a poor substitute for his own lips. Mr. de Coppet says:

"Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: About five weeks ago vague rumors reached me that it was proposed to offer a supper to the Flonzaley Quartet in celebration of its tenth birthday. I was much gratified at the plan, and I felt a desire to be one of the prime movers in it. But suddenly, what did I hear? That Mrs. de Coppet and I were to be included in the celebration. This put the matter in a completely different aspect. I said to myself: 'Those dear friends! They mean well, but they want to offer us just the kind of thing that we are not

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fitted for. Imagine me rising before a considerable number of people and boldly stating that two and two make four! I could not even do that. How much less could I attempt to express any finer sentiment. And they expect me to talk of chamber music! Why, have they forgotten that chamber music is, so it is said, the most intellectual side of the musical art? The thing is unthinkable.' The practical result of it all was that gloom spread over my soul, and that the thought occurred to me: 'How would it do for us to visit the Panama Canal about March 9th? (*Laughter and applause.*) Some people say it is well worth seeing.' Meanwhile time was passing, and my sky was darkening. But suddenly there was a change in my mental attitude; something like a ray of sunlight broke through my clouds. It came from the great sun of human kindness and sympathy, and I felt its benevolent heat warming my heart. I said to myself: 'These friends, who are bidding us join them in this festivity, are not going through a pure form. They have something in their hearts which they wish to express.' And then I saw it all. We personally were to be of no importance in the matter. Even our friends 'the Flonzaleys' and their fine ten years' efforts were to count for little. The purpose was to be for us all to assemble as an expression of undying love and devotion for the great art. (*Applause.*) Ah! That is another thing. Let me in, if you please. And the first thing I knew I was fighting my way to obtain a front seat. (*Applause.*) Yet, now that I am here, I still feel quite incapable of expressing myself. There is only one way for me to do that, and it is hardly a practical one. You would have to come one by one (two at a time would cause me stage-fright) into my little studio at home. There at my piano I might enable you to look down into my heart and to see all there is there of gratitude and appreciation of your

kindness. Mrs. de Coppet, foremost help in all of my artistic endeavors, is one with me in this feeling, I can assure you.

"And now a word of praise and of affection for our artists. (You see I *cannot* help talking sentiment; it is my misfortune as well as my blessing.) You know that for an artist to really hold an audience, he must first of all be a good musician. Secondly, he must have mastered technic, which enables one to express oneself. But lastly and principally, he must be a fine personality and have a soul desirous to communicate to other souls some emotions worth communicating. (*Applause.*) On the size and quality of his soul the final result depends. Well, I have complete confidence in the Flonzaleys. My dear friends, Betti, Pochon, Ara and d'Archambeau are noble fellows. Ten years of almost daily intercourse have steadily increased my admiration, my regard and my affection for them. They understood from the first my idea of quartet playing, and you all know what an edifice they have built upon that foundation. They will continue, I firmly believe, to strive for an ideal (without of course ever reaching it; that would be an unfair trick on our friends, the critics) (*Laughter*), and they will, I earnestly hope, be with us long and ever remain *as now*: the very humble servants of *the Art*. A propos: three cheers for—what do I say? *Three* cheers? I mean three thousand cheers for *the Art*. (*Great applause.*)"

MR. TINKHAM:

Mr. de Coppet has sent me a few more lines:

"When I sent that letter I did not know of the wonderful gift Mrs. de Coppet and I were to receive. Pray express our warmest thanks to all.

E. J. DE COPPET,
(*Applause and cheering.*) PAULINE DE COPPET."

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THE TOASTMASTER:

There are three people in this world I am very sorry for tonight. The best they could do to enjoy this occasion was to send us some telegrams, which with your permission I will read:

“MR. and MRS. E. J. DE COPPET,
Care Sherry’s,
New York.

Congratulations and best wishes to you and Flonzaley Quartet.

FRITZ STAHLBERG.”

“ADOLFO BETTI,
Care Flonzaley Quartet.

Regret that I must be out of town at your celebration.
Heartiest congratulations.

RUBIN GOLDMARK.”

Mr. Goldmark also telegraphs to Mr. de Coppet:

“Regret absence from town prevents my joining in tribute to you. Many congratulations.

GOLDMARK.”

We thought Mr. Whiting was to be with us and speak to us. Great pity he wasn’t! He made a most wonderful speech at the Kneisel celebration four years ago. He says:

“To de Coppet, Flonzaley: Hearty greetings to the honored guests, and regrets that I cannot take part in the celebration.”

Now, it is our privilege to give some souvenirs of this most auspicious occasion, to the great artists whom we have met to honor. And I think we are having a most remarkable illustration of the humanizing effect of music. We have known the myths about what Orpheus did, and what Triton did with his wreathed horn, in taming the monsters of the deep; but here, owing to the influence of the quartet, we have actually got lawyers engaged in giving away things. (*Laughter.*) One ornament of the profession has already given this [pointing to the tankard] to Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet, and now another one, Mr. Nelson Spencer, has something to give to the members of the Quartet.

MR. NELSON S. SPENCER:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: As everyone who has preceded me has said we are here tonight to pay our very best respects to Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet, and we are here also as you have said and as Mr. de Coppet also has said, not to forget the part which the four members of the Quartet have contributed in the past ten years, in their great sympathy with and their great loyalty and their great devotion to the work which Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet have done. We are here such a very friendly, sympathetic company, that it would be supererogatory for me to undertake to say to them what we all feel and what we all think, and I shall not attempt it. But we think we ought not to let the occasion go by without making some record of the distinctive contribution which they have made to the occasion, and to the work which we are here tonight to celebrate. And it is my pleasant duty to ask them, in recognition of our appreciation, to accept the watches, each one of them to accept the watch and the fob which goes with it, which will be presently handed to him. I wish to say immediately that this is intended to be

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no reflection whatever upon the "time" of the Quartet. (*Laughter.*) But I can say, with perhaps more pertinence, that the time which these instruments are to measure, we hope will continue to run as smoothly for the Quartet as their music has and does run for us, and that it will continue to be filled with as large a sum of their friendship for us as we can assure them it will be with our own friendship for them. (*Applause.*)

(Mr. Spencer then presented watches and fobs to the members of the Quartet.)

THE TOASTMASTER:

You have heard what I said about the flexibility of that wonderful instrument the viola, how at one time it can be a bassoon, and at another time a bagpipe, and now you will hear it as a gentleman making a speech. It will be played, as usual, by Mr. Ara.

MR. UGOARA:

Mr. President: My English they say is not good enough to allow me to improvise a speech of thanks in answer to the delightful speech which you so kindly have just delivered here. All I can do is to tell you that my friends, my colleagues and I, are extremely grateful to you for this new proof of friendship. (*Applause.*) And that we hope that, supported by your sympathy, and the sympathy of all the friends here present, we may be able to accomplish what our father in New York, Mr. E. J. de Coppet, has dreamed for us, namely, to touch the heart of the people in telling them, simply, sincerely and honestly, the message of the great masters of music. (*Applause.*) And now will you allow me to read a few lines which I have written for this occasion?

Ladies and Gentlemen: My colleagues and I have been told that the aim of this delightful evening is not only to celebrate the thousand and several musicals at

Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet's house, and their long and brilliant career as Mecene and hostess, but also (and for that we are extremely grateful to the kind promoters of this occasion) to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Flonzaley Quartet's happy life.

Happy life! The word has been often pronounced and printed—Are you sure that it is the proper one?

Have you ever imagined the terrible slavery of these four "*Siamese Brothers*" condemned to play, to bow and to smile, to dine, to rehearse and . . . to pose for the photographer all at the same time and in perfect tempo?

Have you ever realized the crushing burden of this *triple married life* in which every one of us depends constantly and entirely on the good will, the moods and the caprices of his better . . . "*three quarters?*" And all our adventures with managers, agents, hotelkeepers and with the public itself? A few examples will serve as an illustration.

We started our public career some nine years ago in Switzerland. Our first tour was engaged by an unspeakable Genevese and the results were anything but pleasant. In the French Swiss (where we had some friends) things went decently, and in Lausanne the papers had even some words of praise for ". . . the nice little orchestra proceeded to charm the leisure moments of a wealthy gentleman."

But in Zurich (where we didn't know a single soul) we had quite an experience. Arriving there at the eve of the concert we saw neither posters, nor window cards, nor announcements. Next morning, very anxious, we went to the local manager, Mr. X. For dignity's sake we tried to preserve our incognito and merely enquired about the programme of the evening's concert. "What concert?"—"That of chamber music."—"Chamber music?"—"Yes, in the Tonhalle."—"Tonhalle?"

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The clerk knowing absolutely nothing about it, we asked him to call Mr. X. himself. He came, very dignified, very imposing, very grand, and demanded very gently: "What can I do for you, gentlemen?"— "Mr. X.," we said to him rather impatiently, "have you or have you not the arrangement of the Flonzaley Quartet?" And he quite naturally replied: "For four hands, perhaps, gentlemen?" (*Laughter.*) The man had not only forgotten our concert, but even our very name.

A few weeks later we went to Amsterdam, where we had to play Hugo Wolf's beautiful and difficult String Quartet. The first movement went well. But in the beginning of the adagio, where we had to play some very dangerous and complicated chords, I noticed a man in the third row making evident signs of disapprobation. Of course it disturbed me terribly and I determined not to look at him again. But involuntarily, every time I had something difficult to play I looked at my man, and noticed with terror that he was making the most awful faces. I was in despair, and my colleagues too. But what was our surprise when in the artist-room we found the man in question asking us very kindly to put our signatures in his album and assuring us that seldom had he heard such a beautiful ensemble and never in his life a quartet playing so perfectly (gr . . . !), but so perfectly (gr . . . !), but so perfectly (gr . . . !) in time! (*Laughter.*) The man had a nervous tick—a wonder that we didn't get one too!

In Chexbres, Switzerland, several years ago—Mr. de Coppet, who used to give us frequent and precious musical advice, for a long time said nothing about our playing. One Sunday afternoon, after having played at the Flonzaley the Debussy Quartet, and played it, we thought, pretty well, I said to myself: "I wonder if Mr. de Coppet liked this performance and if he is going

to speak about it." I had just formulated this desire when Mr. de Coppet called me to the terrace and when we were there alone told me very courteously: "Ara, I wish to congratulate you."—"Thank you, Mr. de Coppet."—"Indeed," he repeated, "I must congratulate you. I really think for years you didn't have such a beautiful . . . 'beard-cut' as now!" (*Laughter.*)

The honor of the barber was saved—that of the viola player received a terrible shock!

In a small place near Boston, one evening after the concert, we met at the depot a lady who wanted to know all about our instruments—"What kind of instruments do you have?"—"Old Italian instruments."—"Oh, I thought so."—"And what about their makers?"—"Stradivari and Guadanini"—"Oh . . . I thought so.—And what about their age?"—"Two hundred years old."—"Oh . . . I thought so."

"Madame," we said to her, "you seem to be quite a connoisseur."—"Oh no," she answered very modestly, "I am not. But it is easy to see that you have very valuable instruments. It is extraordinary all I could hear in your playing! Sometimes human voices.—Sometimes bird songs.—And sometimes (and here her voice trembled with emotion) and sometimes even . . . 'dogs barking.'"

In a small place in the Middle West we were very much surprised, coming from the concert, to find the hotelkeeper, who had received us very cordially on our arrival, absolutely changed and directly angry with us. We couldn't understand the reason. But very soon he told us frankly: "You boys had a fine business, but you put mine 'on the blink.' I run the moving-picture show in this town. Everybody went to your concert and I had an empty house." And soon after, as though he had struck a glorious idea: "Now, boys," he said, "Why can't we do business together? What about

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playing for me three shows a day—one hundred dollars a week?"

We were foolish enough to decline it. Why! Today some nice little selections of . . . Schoenberg at the "movies" would, perhaps, make quite a sensation!!! (*Laughter.*)

Two years ago we toured a remote part of this country with a charming lady impresario. She was just as kind as she could be and used to invite us for automobile rides and suppers and walks. But about our playing never a single word. We thought it strange. But one evening after a concert in a certain place, where we had had quite an exceptional success, she came just beaming into the artist-room and shaking hands with us she exclaimed with the greatest enthusiasm: "I am so proud." We thought: "At last!" and bowed and thanked.—"I am so proud!" she repeated.—We bowed and thanked again.—"I am so proud" she exclaimed a third and last time, "of my good . . . public!!"

And I shall close with a little adventure we had near New York just a few weeks ago.

A lady, who had known the Quartet for years but had never heard it, told me she intended to come to our second concert at Aeolian Hall. Knowing the lady is not very musical and we were going to play the Schoenberg, I said to her: "Oh, please, Madam, don't come to *that* concert. We are going to have such an awful hard programme!" And she said to me very gently: "Oh, it doesn't matter, Mr. Ara, it doesn't matter at all. I am not so critical!" (*Laughter and applause.*)

THE TOASTMASTER:

You are evidently coming to appreciate what a variety of tones the viola really has. Now I have a conundrum to propose to you. The answer is very simple, but I don't believe you will guess it. "Why has

New York probably the greatest two quartets in the world?" Three more seconds will be allowed for an answer. The answer is simply: "Because it has them both." (*Laughter.*) I am surprised you did not guess that: it is so simple!

They learn from each other, they stimulate each other, and I do not believe that either of them would be the great quartet it is, if they were not in constant association with each other. The most beautiful harmony that I know in music, is the harmony between these two quartets. (*Applause.*)

At the celebration of the Kneisel's twenty-fifth anniversary, the Flonzaleys were there with their tribute of respect and affection. And now at this most happy celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Flonzaleys the Kneisels are with them, and we will hear again from the viola. Mr. Svecenski.

MR. LOUIS SVESENSKI:

Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentlemen: Mr. Ara said he spoke a very poor English. I wish to say I speak an excellent English, but I wish I could prepare a speech such as Mr. Ara has prepared. In fact, I have prepared nothing, and I feel embarrassed, and I wish Mr. Kneisel, and Mr. Letz and Mr. Willeke would come and stand with me so that I should feel more comfortable, but I know they won't.

I should like first to express in behalf of the Kneisel Quartet our heartiest thanks to the gentlemen of the Committee of Arrangements for asking us to come here tonight. I wish to assure the Committee, and I wish to assure Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet, and the Flonzaleys, that it would have been a very great disappointment if circumstances had prevented us from being here tonight. When some weeks ago Mr. Rice told us about the plan of having this delightful evening, we were very

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happy to hear of it, and when he told us that we would be asked to come here as guests, we were more than delighted. As to myself, I shrank a little bit when he told me that I might perhaps be asked to say a few words, because I at once felt aware of a certain constitutional deficiency which always interfered with my happiness whenever I had to speak to more than half a dozen people, but somehow or other I lightheartedly got over it, and I gave myself to the happy perspective of the 9th of March, and as the time drew near I began to think about it, and I talked to my colleagues and told them that I really did not feel up to speaking, that I should only say a few words of congratulation to the Quartet and Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet, but it seemed that my colleagues did not believe in the ability to speak without preparation. They charged me to prepare a speech, take pencil and paper in hand, etc., and I started, on our trips, and I thought that a speech must have an introduction of some kind, and I thought the best thing would be to relate how Mr. Rice came to us and told us about this evening and that the 9th of March had been chosen for the occasion, and that I took at once my date book and looked and I found that in all the weeks before the 9th of March, the 9th of March happened to be free, and so I put that in the best words I could, and looked it over, and I said "This is not the very choicest introduction to the speech, when we are to celebrate the Quartet which after all makes a living from engagements, to tell them that we had all the evenings engaged except March 9th." So I crossed it out and started over again. I said, it was not so, I didn't look at my engagement book, but we at once accepted. And then I read it over, and I said, "Well, that will not do, to say we had no engagement, that we were free to accept at any time anything;" so I crossed that out; and I said to myself, I

shall not make a speech, just come here and say something less ambitious, and that is what I am doing now, ladies and gentlemen. (*Laughter and applause.*)

What I really want to say is that we are proud that such an occasion has come, that an organization only ten years old could have brought around so many of the most discriminating, most earnest music-lovers to pay their respects. I know the beginning of the Flonzaley Quartet, I know their beginning in New York, and I admire the spirit in which they began. They came here as young artists, half or perhaps more advanced in their career, fully equipped in their art, with diplomas of their artistic maturity printed, and unwritten as by successes with their audiences which they had in performing on various occasions by themselves—here they came and got together to drop their achievements on their various instruments, to devote themselves to try to conquer an entirely new art that had nothing to do with what they had been doing before. To play quartet, the technique which you have acquired means almost nothing. That sounds perhaps strong, but it is so, ladies and gentlemen. To master your instrument alone, and to master it in accord with others, is a four-fold difficulty. The fluency, the intonation, all that belongs under the name of "technique," is by far increased in playing ensemble. So these four gentlemen began and worked with a spirit that is most admirable, they started to play Haydn's Quartets with the same seriousness, they looked over their parts which seemed like child's play for a virtuoso violinist, and studied more seriously perhaps than they had when they worked at their virtuoso pieces. It was a specially delightful thing to observe how Mr. Betti and Mr. Pochon alternated (perhaps some of you don't know, but a great many do) changed from the first desk to the second, they didn't care where they were to sit, as long

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as they could play quartet; until finally each one got into his own place, and they became what they are now.

Of course, the viola player interested me most of all. He did not alternate with anybody; he was right, he shouldn't. (*Applause.*) The viola player doesn't change with anyone. He has to suffer, while the first violin—of course he has the enjoyment. The second violin, if he is praised they say “he plays like the first, you couldn't tell the difference.” But what does he hear when the viola is mentioned? Once in a while someone comes and says, “Will you please tell me ‘What is a viola?’” Another one comes and says: “I admired your playing very much. I used to hear the viola, and I always found it a very nasal sort of instrument. You can't hear the viola when *you* play!” So his finest achievement with the viola is that he can't be heard. The other comes and says: “Mr. Ara, I can't tell you how I enjoyed your viola tonight; it sounded like a 'cello.” Work and work and work, until the viola sounded like a 'cello!” On the next occasion when they played the Schoenberg Quartet, I heard someone thought Mr. Ara sounded like an oboe!—and here Mr. Ara works all his life to do his best on the viola.

As to the 'cellist, I don't dare to speak about him at all. They are very sensitive, the 'cellists—on evenings when they are to play Bach's Sonata, and afterwards—so I really will skip him. That is my experience with 'cellists.

I don't like to keep your attention too long, but I must mention the time when such audiences as the Flonzaley Quartet attract, and such gatherings, were almost unbelievable. And it is not so very long ago, I remember, that Mr. Kneisel, before one of our concerts here, while we were still in Boston, met, when he was just getting ready to go to the concert, a manager in the lobby of the hotel where Mr. Kneisel was stopping.

He casually asked the manager if he wouldn't come and hear the concert, upon which this manager graciously said: "Now, Mr. Kneisel, you mustn't mind my saying this, but I go to hear a quartet playing when I have a well cushioned sofa or arm chair, and a good cigar, otherwise you won't get me to that concert." Well, Mr. Kneisel gave him the cigar. He didn't come to the concert. A few years later after we had resigned from the Boston Orchestra, Mr. Kneisel met the same manager. Then he offered Mr. Kneisel a cigar, and showed a great deal of interest in quartet music, thinking that Mr. Kneisel meant to ask him to take charge of the business—which he didn't; he smoked the cigar.

But as to the achievements of the Flonzaley Quartet, I think it is unnecessary to say anything. We are all here to pay our respects. Their achievements are wonderful, and what is more wonderful is that they achieved all this in ten years only. We know every milestone of the stony road which they had to travel in order to reach the *ensemble* with which they surprise audiences now in two continents, and their achievements, the marvelous speed with which they got where they are now, I suppose was the reason that friends said it was time now to halt and give expression to our admiration.

As to Mr. de Coppet, I have on other occasions publicly told, and I often told him, and members of the Quartet tell him, how much we appreciate the kindness he has shown to us from the very beginning of our Quartet. If he was not our father, he was just as good as an uncle. (*Laughter and applause.*) In concluding, I wish that Mr. de Coppet may be met in Heaven by a string quartet.

THE TOASTMASTER:

"Uncle" de Coppet wishes me to say that he was present at the first Kneisel concert, and that

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he has been a subscriber ever since. (*Laughter and applause.*)

Now this most pathetic account of accidents by field and flood, reminds me of something interesting in connection with our experiences tonight. There is extant a letter of Wagner's in which he said that once when he was travelling, he was delayed, very greatly to his annoyance, when in a hurry to get on, in a city he did not particularly like, and he was bored nearly to death. But he found compensation for there was to be a quartet concert that night, and he went to it, and they played what he called "my beloved adagio." That beloved adagio of Wagner's was the second movement of the Beethoven Quartet which the Flonzaleys played tonight. And how they did play it!

Now in this Twentieth Century, there are two things we can't escape. With a certain portion of the human race as active as it is, we cannot escape politics, and I hope you realized in my opening remarks, when I was paying my profoundest respects to the noblest activity in which the ladies' quartet is engaged, that I managed to steer clear of the political implication.

The other thing which we can't escape in this age, is science. The greatest American biologist has made a worldwide reputation in his investigations of the cell, and it is not far from the cell to the cello. I have often wondered whether he would have reached his eminence, if he had not in his leisure moments made some investigations in the hair of the horse and the intestines of the cat—I believe, to speak strictly, it is the intestines of the sheep—but at all events America's greatest biologist has a personal knowledge of catgut and horsehair, and by using them in connection has found for himself that recreation which his great and profound and successful labors have required; and if Prof. Wilson will enlighten us a little more on that subject, I have

no doubt it will be greatly for our edification and enjoyment.

PROF. EDMUND B. WILSON:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I suppose these biological references of our Chairman refer to the fact that I sometimes amuse myself, or used to amuse myself, by trying to play a 'cello. Now it is a very curious peculiarity of human nature, which has often been commented on, that we are not nearly so proud of those things which it is our business to do in life, and which we are supposed to do decently well, as of those which we do by way of recreation and amusement, and which it is quite certain that very frequently we do extremely badly. I suppose it is perhaps for this reason that I am so much flattered to be introduced to this audience as one who is concerned with horsehair and catgut. I am certainly proud to be admitted to that distinguished galaxy of talent of which our Chairman this evening is himself so distinguished an ornament, as also Mr. d'Archambeau, Miss Littlehales, Mr. Willeke, Mr. Rice, and perhaps I may add Mr. Tuthill not to mention lesser luminaries. I have been trying as I sat here this evening, to recall how many years it is since I had the pleasure of hearing quartets at the house of Mr. de Coppet. I don't remember exactly, but I am sure that it is upwards of twenty years. Perhaps that is long enough to give me a sort of claim to an obscure corner among the outposts of the old guard of the de Coppet Quartet. Now I remember in those days that the Quartet had a large sprinkling of amateurs, at times was entirely composed of amateurs. We older members of the circle have watched with great interest (perhaps you will allow me to fall for a moment into the vernacular of my own profession, which happens to be that of naturalist), the evolution of the de Coppet Quartet,

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we have witnessed the inexorable mutation of the law of natural selection, and the law of the survival of the fittest. The first to fall by the wayside were the amateurs. (*Laughter.*) I remember distinctly when it was first announced to one of those amateurs that he would not be allowed to play any longer in the Quartet unless he would promise to practice at least one hour a day. He dropped out of the Quartet, as I remember. Now later on there were, years after the elimination of the amateurs, years of progressively broadening experience until Mr. de Coppet had the genius to bring together the combination of artists whom we all know so well and of whom we are all so proud (*Applause*), almost as if we had done it ourselves. The Quartet took the name, a very charming name, of Flonzaley, but the name which belongs to this Quartet, the name which is rightfully ours, the one by which I shall always think of it, is the *de Coppet Quartet*. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am somewhat embarrassed to know how to choose my language as I proceed; because what I should like to do would be to tell Mr. de Coppet exactly what I think of him, and yet I know that would probably be the last thing in the world that so modest a man as Mr. de Coppet would wish to have me do, and in this dilemma I am going to make use of words used by somebody else, words said of somebody else. They were the words used by Mr. Saint Gaudens, whose Reminiscences I have recently read, in a letter addressed to Maxfield Parrish, congratulating him on some of his artistic achievements, I think they were the illustrations for Milton's *l'Allegro*, which was published in the Century Magazine. Mr. Saint Gaudens said:

“It is always an astonishment to me, how, after all the fine things seem to have been done, and after all the possibilities of beauty seem to have been exhausted, some man

like you will come along and strike another note just as distinctful and just as fine."

Now this, or something like this, is what I should like to say about Mr. de Coppet this evening. He has done a fine and distinguished thing for the great circle of music lovers among his friends, and for the still greater circles of music lovers in New York City, in America, and in the countries beyond the sea.

Now I have two other things to which I wish in very few words to give expression. I wish in the first place to say once more, although it has already been said several times this evening, I shall say once more for my own part and on behalf of so many of my friends: How many delightful hours, how many opportunities for the cultivation of our musical tastes, we owe to the ever ready and charming hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. de Coppet. (*Applause.*) They have almost made us forget how much we owe them, in the beautiful and gracious way in which that hospitality has been extended. (*Applause.*)

And now the other and last thing which I wish to do is to take off my hat to the de Coppet Quartet. We have from the first felt their fine artistic qualities, and we have seen them grow year by year in artistic stature and mastery, until they have taken their assured place among the great quartet organizations of the world. I think if anyone has had any lingering doubts in regard to this, they must have been dissipated in listening to the magnificent exhibition which they have recently given us of artistic mastery of technical virtuosity, of complete command of the art of chamber music in the remarkable performances which they have given us of the Schoenberg Quartet; how much pleasure we all owe to their delightful art! They have introduced us to many new musical acquaintances, and they have con-

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tinually revealed to us new beauties even in our oldest friends in the quartet literature. From Haydn to Schoenberg is a pretty long road to travel. I will confess that for me at least, there have been some pretty rough spots on the way, particularly toward the latter part of it, but we have been led along that pathway, sometimes a little mystified, sometimes turning to look back at the old, familiar landmarks, always with delight, always with confidence in our guides, and for this, ladies and gentlemen, we thank them with all our hearts. To us, they are not merely the distinguished artists whose triumphs we have followed and shall follow hereafter, God willing, with so much pleasure and with so much profit. They are our very good friends, and we wish them all prosperity and all happiness! (*Applause.*)

THE TOASTMASTER:

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the last number will be a little reminiscence of Parsifal. I have suspected that part of the allegory of Parsifal was that the enchantress was a stringed instrument, and almost everybody who has spoken to you tonight has yielded to that enchantment by becoming a player. There is here one gentleman of wit and eloquence who has constantly exposed himself to the enchantment, but remains innocent, and I am going to call upon him to give us an unprejudiced view of all for which we have been declaring our worship. I call upon Mr. John Jay Chapman.

MR. JOHN JAY CHAPMAN:

Mr. Chairman, and Ladies and Gentlemen: This is not a degree I have handed to Mr. de Coppet. It is merely a copy of a few verses. They are called "Chamber Music" and their reading will occupy but a very few moments:

“Silence: the sunset gilds the frozen ground
But here within all’s curtained; stands are set
In the wide salon where gilt chairs abound
And eager listeners wait. The band is met
Whose tuning sheds a cheerful hum around:
Prophetic notes! the tapers brighten at the sound.

The scattered sheets of music on the floor
Reflect a lustre from the yellow flame.
My sight dissolves . . . Lo, Haydn at the door
Enters like some stiff angel from his frame,
Bearing the bundle of his latest score
Which he distributes, smiling, to the blessed four.

But is not Haydn dead? He dies no more
So long as these shall meet! The magic wand
Brings the old master through the shadowy door,
And upright in the midst his soul doth stand
While through the chords his sunny force doth pour.
—Ah, Haydn, has thou truly ever lived before?

O intimate acquaintance! When we meet
The hearts of old musicians there is shown
A conversation deeper and more sweet
Than all but saints or lovers e’er have known.
Is there an earthly friendship so complete
As this that in a heaven-born passion hath its seat?

The gods and half-gods meet us everywhere,
But are at home in music. There they live
In privacy: Apollo suns his hair,
And Aphrodite to the stars doth give
The more-than-mortal eyes that almost stare
So wide they are, so open and so unaware.

And while the gods do strum and tune a lay
To please their godships—there comes creeping in
De Coppet with his crew to steal away
The secret flame. The trembling violin
Bratsche and cello, which his pirates play,
Bear the bright fire,—yes, undiminished re-convey.

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We are those guests who knew the joy sincere
Of that Promethean plunder; and to-night
Are wiser for the start of many a tear
That chased surprised beauty in her flight,
And happier for those hours of inward cheer,
The thought of which,—dear hosts of many days,—doth
draw us here.”

THE TOASTMASTER:

And now at the risk of a bit of egotism, I want to draw a useful moral lesson from my experience this evening. Don’t ever think that what appears to be a misfortune is necessarily one. As I have been sitting here tonight and thinking over those various experiences with the viola, I thought to myself that it was a great misfortune for me that I did not take the viola instead of the violoncello. Well, if I had, perhaps I should not have been the worst quartet player in New York, and if I were not the worst quartet player in New York, I should not have had the great pleasure of presiding on this most felicitous occasion.

And now, I close as I closed at the silver wedding of the Kneisel Quartet with their audiences. This is the wooden, or tin, wedding,—which is it, Mrs. de Coppet? (A voice: “Tin.”) This is the tin wedding of the Flonzaleys with their audiences. I hope for them, as I hoped for the Kneisels, that we shall all be at the golden wedding—and if we are not there in the flesh, may we be there in the spirit! (*Great applause.*)





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